



# BLUEPRINT

City of San Antonio's Development Services Newsletter

Summer 2001 ■ Issue 6

## Call us the Development Services Department

Since our last publication, new City Manager Terry Brechtel ushered in a few changes to the City organization, including a reorganization of land development functions.

The Building Inspections Department has been renamed the Development Services Department. With the reorganization, the Land Development Division of the Planning Department and the Development Engineering section of the Public Works Department have become part of Development Services.

City zoning and platting services are now under the administration of Development Services as well as development drainage, platting and traffic engineering review.

The move is intended to bring the majority of the City's

development services under one umbrella in order to improve communication and supervision and ultimately to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the development process.

The Planning Department continues to perform comprehensive, long-range planning for the City. However, the administration of the Zoning and Planning Commissions now resides within the Development Services Department as well as responsibility for the implementation of the new Unified Development Code.

With the transfer of development engineering from Public Works and another reorganization in which Environmental Services was classified as a new department, Public Works now focuses mainly on infrastructure improvements and maintenance.



## One Stop Center in the works

City Council recently approved a development agreement with Embrey Partners and H.B. Zachry for the design and construction of the City's One Stop Development Services Center.

The new center, which will be located at the northwest corner of Alamo and Flores streets, will provide convenient "One Stop" customer access to development services. These services include the departments of Development Services and Planning as well as the Fire Marshal's Office, Health Code Inspectors, Economic Development Department Small Business Programs, as well as CPS, SAWS, and Bexar County representatives.

Design work on the civic quality building has begun by design architect, RVK, Inc. The general contractor is Metropolitan Contracting. Construction of the center should begin in the fall and should be ready for occupancy in early 2003.



**So, how long does it take to get a permit?**

How long does it take to get a permit? Development Services provides an answer to this question everyday. Regardless of the size and complexity of a project, every applicant wants their permit the next day. So how long does it really take to get a permit?

See **Building Permits**/Page 2

## Don't skimp on fire alarm plans



The Development Services Department Fire Protection section has a few reminders to keep the fire alarm submittal review process flowing smoothly.

- Indicate candela ratings for notification appliances on the plans. This will speed up the review of your plans and ensure that proper visual coverage is provided for optimum notification.
- Double check your submittal package. Make sure you have everything that is required.
- Provide a letter of the scope of work. If it is not obvious that you are installing a new fire alarm system, then state the intent of your work.

If you are unsure your submittal package is complete or have questions, you may call **(210) 207-8248** to verify any materials that need to be included.

## Urgent Notice

In accordance with Article 9102(k) of the Texas Civil Statutes as amended June 17, 2001 regarding the elimination of architectural barriers, the City of San Antonio will no longer accept building permit applications for certain projects unless the applicant provides verification that the building or facility is registered with the Texas Department of Licensing and Registration (TDLR).

This requirement applies to all building permit applications for new construction, renovation, modification, and alteration of buildings or facilities that have an estimated construction cost of \$50,000 or more.

The City will accept a copy of the TDLR Project Registration Form showing the State's file stamp date and an assigned EAB (Elimination of Architectural Barriers) number. The EAB number may be written on the permit application instead of attaching a copy of the registration form, but the application will not be formally accepted until City staff can verify the number with the TDLR.

For more information visit the TDLR website at [www.license.state.tx.us](http://www.license.state.tx.us).

## Building Permits from page 1

Plan review staffing has increased over the past two years in response to City growth, now the ninth largest city in the United States. Additionally, the Department was reorganized and renamed Development Services to focus on customer service. To this end, Development Services has established a team approach to plan review with the goal to develop more consistency, continuity and efficiency regarding the review of similar building types.

The two plan-review teams, Blue and Red, are each overseen by a Plan Review Manager. The Plan Review Manager provides supervision and direction in a multi-disciplinary environment. The Manager serves as the primary customer contact for each team for meetings, plan review status, questions, and other project-related concerns. The Manager evaluates and coordinates all comments and issues with plan reviewers and meets with architects, engineers, developers and applicants to address and resolve concerns. Brian McGraw, C.P.E., heads the Red Team at **(210) 207-8394**. The Plan Review Manager for the Blue Team is Albert Raymond, R.A., at **(210) 207-8061**.

Projects are grouped by category and type of work and assigned to a specific team to ensure consistency and continuity in the review of similar projects. The Red Team reviews

school projects, single-family residential projects, and odd-numbered new and miscellaneous commercial projects. The Blue Team reviews interior finish-out projects, C.R.A.G. (Community Revitalization Action Group) projects, and even-numbered new and miscellaneous commercial projects. Through project briefings, preliminary plan review meetings and enforcement of the completeness review process, the department will ensure the intake of complete and coordinated plans.



Building plan review varies from residential to commercial structures.

For revisions and re-submissions, applicants must submit revisions to the Plan Review Manager for all plan comments. The applicant must wait until the initial review of the plan is complete and submit one complete package addressing all comments. Each revision package should include a cover letter outlining each comment with a corresponding response. The Plan Review Manager will review every re-route submission to ensure all issues are addressed prior to the plans being re-reviewed. All re-route sub-

missions take an average of seven days for each discipline to review.

So, how long does it take to get a permit? If the plans are complete and accurate and the applicant has submitted all associated completeness review items, the average time to complete the initial review is 45 days for new commercial structures and seven days for residential structures.

## Development Services Numbers

Area code 210 and prefix 207

### DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Main	7776
One Stop	5860
Administration	8232/8237
Administration Fax	3315
Building Code	8314
Electrical Code	8286
Mechanical Code	8242
Plumbing Code	8279
Sign Code	8287
Environmental Code	8265
Permitting	8263
Permitting Fax	4252
Accounting	8227
Drafting/GIS	8260
Licensing	8235
Board of Adjustment	8318
Central Records	8211
Records Fax	6378
Ombudsmen	8201/8292
Blue Plan Review Team	8061
Red Plan Review Team	8394
Plan Review Fax	4403
Drainage Engineering	8052
Drainage Engineering Fax	6553
Engineering & Traffic	7720
Engineering & Traffic Fax	4418
Zoning and Platting	7900

### PUBLIC WORKS

Administration	8020
Administration Fax	4406

### PLANNING

Administration	7873
Historic Preservation	8316
Neighborhoods/ Urban Design	2736

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

Administration	8400
Administration Fax	8542
Fire Prevention	7966
Fire Prevention Fax	7949

### METRO HEALTH

Administration	8731
Administration Fax	8999
Food/Env.Services	8853
Food Sanitation	4079

### AVIATION

Administration	3450
Administration Fax	3500
Planning & Engineering	3517

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Administration	8080
Administration Fax	8151
Small Business	8080
Small Business Fax	3909

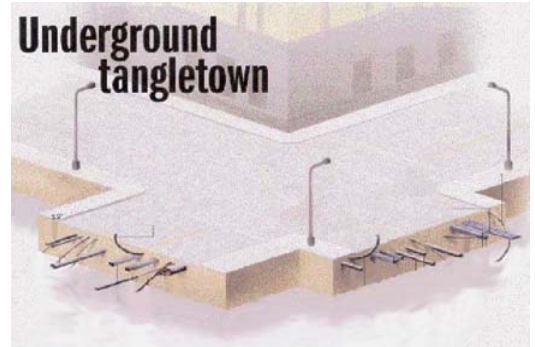
## Better protection offered for rights of way

The City recently approved a Right-of-Way (R.O.W.) Management ordinance as a result of an evaluation of the City's previous street cut policies.

The City Council Street Maintenance Committee oversaw the revision of policies to improve coordination and accountability on utility-related street excavations. The committee's findings included: coordination between utility companies and the City needed to be improved; "emergency" street cuts needed to be better defined; trench restoration practices needed to be improved; and incentives for utility companies to complete work in a quality and timely manner needed to be explored.

After numerous meetings between the Street Maintenance Committee, the Public Works Department and local utility companies, it was determined that a R.O.W. management ordinance was necessary to manage and regulate City right of ways. The value of the City's street infrastructure is estimated at \$3.4 billion and street excavations can reduce the life of a street by up to 64%. Excavations limit the public's use of streets, impact air quality, reduce parking, and result in lost business for merchants. Excavations also degrade and shorten the life of street surfaces, and increase the frequency and cost of resurfacing, maintenance and repair regardless of the quality of restoration.

General provisions of the R.O.W. ordi-



The glut of underground cables and pipelines on city streets increases the risk of accidental cuts.

nance include enhanced administration and enforcement of the regulations. The Public Works Director is responsible for all issues related to the City's right of ways, including permit approvals and enforcement of regulations.

In order to obtain permits and improve monitoring, the new ordinance requires registration with the City by R.O.W. users. As part of the registration process, R.O.W. users must be certified through a City-approved trainer on pedestrian and vehicle safety procedures in construction zones. Excavation permit applications must state the extent, dimensions, character and purpose of the excavation and include maps of the location, existing and proposed utility facilities, and construction method and schedule.

Permits may be obtained at the Street Maintenance Division of the Public Works Department, 5103 Old Hwy. 90 West. For additional information, call (210) 207-6949.

## Board appointments taking their seats

The following have been appointed by the City Council to the Planning and Zoning Commissions and Zoning Board of Adjustment.

### Planning Commission

District 1 - Hector Frausto, a pharmacist

District 9 - Donald R. McCale III, a pharmaceutical sales representative

### Zoning Commission

District 9 - James McAden, an account manager

District 8 - Jerry F. Morell, an attorney

Previous appointees, Ralph Mehninger and Ernani Falcone, are the elected Chairman and Vice

Chairman respectively.

### Zoning Board of Adjustment

Mayor's Representative - Ms. Lisa L. Musial, a realtor

District 1 - Michael Ramirez, an attorney

District 4 - Abe Ramirez

Alternate - James Zaccaria, a consultant

Alternate - Patrick Filyk, an attorney

Alternate - Victoria Reed, an account representative



## Update: New Unified Development Code now in effect

### ■ Zoning Issues

As of June 4, 2001, the new Unified Development Code (U.D.C.), with some exceptions, became effective. As a result, all new zoning cases filed are processed under new zoning district categories. Zoning cases filed and scheduled prior to June 4, 2001 will be processed under previous zoning district categories.

On February 4, 2002, all properties with either 1938 or 1965 zoning district categories will be converted to the new U.D.C. zoning categories. A copy of the conversion table from 1938 and 1965 zoning districts to the new zoning districts can be found in Appendix "D" of the new U.D.C. or on the Development Services Department web site at [www.sanantonio.gov/dsd](http://www.sanantonio.gov/dsd).

### ■ Subdivision Issues

As of June 4, 2001, all new subdivision plats submitted are processed under the provisions of the new U.D.C. The exception to this are properties which the owners have an approved vested rights claim that allows for platting under the previous U.D.C.

### ■ Education

Training sessions on the new U.D.C. for stakeholders and interested citizens are slated for August.

Please call **(210) 207-7900** for general questions about new zoning districts and rezoning process, new subdivision platting process, and vested rights.

Questions regarding interpretation of the new U.D.C. may be addressed to Bill Telford, Planning Manager, at **(210) 207-7900**. Interpretation issues that cannot be resolved must be submitted to the City Council U.D.C. Technical Advisory Committee. This committee meets the last Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Municipal Plaza "B" Room, 114 W. Commerce. Interpretation issues may be addressed to the committee at these meetings during the Citizens to be Heard portion of the agenda.

## BLUEPRINT

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

If you have any questions or comments about the Blueprint newsletter,  
or have story ideas, please e-mail [kevinb@sanantonio.gov](mailto:kevinb@sanantonio.gov) or call (210) 207-6535